Gender-based violence (GBV) affects one in three women worldwide and is one of the most widespread abuses of human rights globally. Women and girls suffer increased incidents of violence during conflict and emergencies, yet their safety and priorities have been historically ignored and under-addressed due to pervasive gender inequality and discrimination. The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) must mark a fundamental shift in the humanitarian system’s ability to protect and empower women and girls as an urgent and vital priority.

**A responsibility for us all**
The IRC believes in working for a world in which women and girls pursue their potential, free from violence and inequality. Through our work in nearly 30 countries across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the U.S., IRC’s innovative programs focus on providing care and support to women and girls who have experienced violence while also tackling the root causes of GBV. We work to help restore the dignity of survivors and create opportunities for women and girls to rebuild and transform their lives. However, we also recognize that our actions alone are not enough. The responsibility to protect women and girls from violence in emergencies is a responsibility for the entire humanitarian sector; together we must ensure that women and girls are no longer left behind.

**How the WHS can deliver**
Today, there are more international and national policy frameworks on the rights, protection and empowerment of women and girls than ever before. Yet we continue to see demand surpass committed resources. We believe that by taking the following actions, the international humanitarian community can make significant strides towards a world in which women and girls are protected from GBV, have safe access to specialized survivor services, and have a meaningful voice in the systems, policies, and programs that impact their lives:

- **Governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and implementing partners** should endorse the *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies* and implement specific commitments under its Road Map to help transform the humanitarian response to GBV in emergencies

- **Governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and implementing partners** should place women and girls at the center of humanitarian programs and response, including through meaningful engagement of affected populations and capacity-building for local women’s organizations

- **All implementing partners** should commit to the full implementation of the IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, including staff-wide training and capacity-building across all sectors, adequate resourcing, and monitoring and evaluation

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1 The 2015 Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender-based Violence (GBV) Guidelines can be accessed at: [http://gbvguidelines.org/](http://gbvguidelines.org/)
• All implementing partners across all sectors should consistently include GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response in all emergency assessments and reports, emergency preparedness and response plans and funding schemes

• Donors and implementing partners should adapt their policies and programmatic priorities to ensure that funding and provision of specialized GBV services takes place at the onset of all emergency responses

• Donors should make their contributions to common funding pools contingent upon allocations to GBV programs, in compliance with global minimum standards on the prevention and mitigation of GBV in emergencies

• Donors should require all actors seeking funding to explicitly address in their funding applications how they will mitigate the risk of and respond to GBV, regardless of their sector or area of focus

IRC commitments
The IRC will use the WHS as an opportunity to share our growing ambitions and our commitment to do more to support the safety, needs and rights of women and girls affected by conflict and disaster. We commit to doing the following by 2020:

• 80% of all IRC country level strategic plans will incorporate commitments to gender equality (by 2017)

• IRC will support the roll-out and implementation of the IASC GBV Guidelines through trainings and capacity building to personnel across humanitarian response sectors

• IRC will leverage organizational and coalition leadership to advocate for humanitarian actors to prioritize GBV prevention and response as lifesaving from the onset of emergencies

• IRC will provide training, technical support, and small grants to 25 local organizations working across the Horn and East Africa, with the aim of advancing their internal GBV emergency preparedness and ability to engage in local and national preparedness and response efforts

• IRC will coordinate the Real Time Accountability Partnership (RTAP) at the global level and act as RTAP implementing partner, advancing work on a “framework for action” to reinforce accountability to GBV prioritization, integration, and coordination at strategic levels across the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC)

• IRC will continue to build technical capacity on essential standards of a survivor-centered approach to GBV case management and data collection

• IRC will continue to conduct and disseminate rigorous research on violence against women and girls (VAWG) in humanitarian contexts

For more information about our work on women’s protection and empowerment, please visit www.gbvresponders.org or contact Zarina Khan at Zarina.Khan@rescue-uk.org (London) or Janine Kossen at Janine.Kossen@rescue.org (Washington DC)